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Summary record of the 34th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Bródi ..... (Hungary)
Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kelapile

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 139: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (*continued*) (A/63/728 and A/63/761)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) (A/63/728), recalled that the Mission's mandate had been extended for six months, until 31 July 2008, by Security Council resolution 1798 (2008). In its resolution 1827 (2008), the Council had decided to terminate the mandate of UNMEE on 31 July 2008 and UNMEE had therefore commenced its administrative liquidation, including the disposition of its assets, on 1 August 2008.

2. The inventory value of the Mission's assets proposed for donation, on a free-of-charge basis, to the Government of Ethiopia was $1,398,500, representing 2.5 per cent of the total inventory value of UNMEE assets, which amounted to $56,218,700. The proposed donation of those assets, comprised primarily of prefabricated facilities and information technology equipment (computers and printers), would enhance the Ethiopian Government's operational capabilities. Furthermore, the cost of dismantling, refurbishing, packing and shipping the assets would render their transfer largely uneconomical.

3. UNMEE had also identified for donation to the Government of Eritrea, on a free-of-charge basis, assets with an inventory value of $6,082,100, representing 10.8 per cent of the total inventory value of the Mission's assets. The proposed donation, comprised primarily of prefabricated facilities, generators and accommodation equipment, would enhance the Eritrean Government's operational capabilities. On 16 February 2009, in the context of the Mission's administrative liquidation, the Government of Eritrea had signed a certificate of temporary possession to receive and hold in safe custody the UNMEE assets, pending General Assembly approval of their proposed donation. However, in a note verbale dated 25 February 2009, the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations had informed the Secretariat that the donation had not been accepted by the communities concerned in Eritrea and that the United Nations should therefore make the necessary arrangements for shipping out all its remaining assets in Eritrea. The Advisory Committee had been updated on those developments on 5 March 2009.

4. In its resolution 1863 (2009), the Security Council had expressed its intent to establish a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia as a follow-on force to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), subject to a further Security Council decision by 1 June 2009, and had welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for immediate in-kind enhancement of AMISOM through the transfer of assets following the liquidation of UNMEE. The assets proposed for donation to the African Union represented 12.3 per cent of the total inventory value of the Mission's assets and consisted mainly of prefabricated buildings, including ablution units and associated equipment, generators, air conditioners and soft-skin vehicles, which would enhance the operational capabilities of AMISOM.

5. Given that the donation of UNMEE assets to the Government of Eritrea had not been accepted by the communities concerned, the General Assembly was invited to approve the donation of the Mission's assets to the Government of Ethiopia and the African Union.

6. **Mr. Kelapile** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the donation of assets of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (A/63/761), recalled that the Secretary-General's report on the financing of that Mission (A/63/728) provided details on the proposed donation of UNMEE assets following the termination by the Security Council of the Mission's mandate. The assets proposed for donation had been placed in the temporary custody of the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea and of the African Union. The Advisory Committee had subsequently been informed that the Permanent Mission of Eritrea had advised the Secretariat that the donation of UNMEE assets had not been accepted by the communities concerned and that the United Nations should make the necessary arrangements for shipping out all its remaining assets in Eritrea. The Advisory Committee had also been informed that, since UNMEE had already finalized the field liquidation process, terminated the service contracts and repatriated its staff, it was not in a position to recover the assets and intended to leave them in situ.

7. The Advisory Committee trusted that the liquidation process would be concluded as efficiently as possible, despite the changed circumstances, and recommended that the Organization's potential liability, if any, should be clarified and that such information should be provided to the General Assembly during its consideration of the Secretary-General's report (A/63/728). It also noted that the Secretary-General was seeking the General Assembly's ex post facto approval for the transfer of the Mission's assets, since they had already been placed in temporary custody of the intended recipients. The Advisory Committee wished to point out that there was no provision in the Financial Regulations and Rules for the placement of such assets in temporary custody pending General Assembly approval. In the Committee's view, that matter needed to be addressed.

8. Under the circumstances, the Committee did not object to the course of action proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 16 (a) and (c) of his report.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.